

RURAL HEALTH DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS (RHDP)

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

MOBILE DENTALS	1
MOBILE DENTALS CONT.	2
CHOWCHILLA PROJECT	3
CHOWCHILLA PROJECT CONT.	4

MOBILE DENTALS

What is a Mobile Dental Unit?

A mobile dental unit is a large vehicle that houses dental staff and equipment capable of providing comprehensive dental services. It is called "mobile" because the vehicle is driven or hauled to various locations throughout the state to bring services to areas that would otherwise have limited dental services.

The Healthy Families Program (HFP), the low cost

insurance program for children and teens in California, and the participating Rural Health Demonstration Projects (RHDP) dental plans, have formed a partnership that teams up their respective mobile dental van programs to expand access to essential dental services for medically underserved children residing in rural areas of the state.

The mission of mobile dental vans is to make quality dental care available to those children

who might not otherwise receive it. Mobile dental vans are equipped to provide complete comprehensive dentistry on site.

Most mobile dental projects are school based and work collaboratively with local school districts and school nurses to arrange site and service schedules. The side benefits of school-based mobile dentals include a reduction in lost time from school for the child, and from work for the parent,

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

*The RHDP through it's participating dental plans provides oral health education and free dental screenings to approximately 7,352 children annually in California.

*Currently, there are 66 combined dental and medical RHDPs.



The Healthy Smiles Mobile Dental Van

MOBILE DENTALS CONT.

as well as eliminating the need for transportation to and from the dentist.

Children are screened and escorted directly onto the mobile vans. They receive comprehensive dental services based on screening results. Children also watch a fun and educational video on dental care. In addition, they receive a free dental care kit which includes a toothbrush, toothpaste, and brushing instructions.

Annually, the RHDP provides oral health education, free dental screenings and restorative services to approximately 7,352 children in California.

The mobile dental projects provide approximately 2,600 of the visits to more than 1,950 California youngsters

living in areas with limited access to oral health care. By leveraging the resources of our respective mobile dental vans, more care is and will be provided sooner to greater numbers of needy children.

Mobile dental projects provide approximately 2,600 visits per year to California youngsters living in areas with limited access to oral health care.



The Rural Health Demonstration Project is currently funding over ten mobile dental vans to provide dental services to children in rural areas of California.



Pictures-Top Right: Children from Mildred Perkins Elementary School in Modesto receiving oral health services on the Access/Premier Mobile Dental Van

Center: Children waiting in line to receive dental services outside the Access Dental Van at D. H. White Elementary School in Isleton.

Bottom: Access/Premier Mobile Dental Van

CHOWCHILLA PROJECT

The *New Start-Darin Camarena Center* (DMC) community/migrant health center opened for service in the city of Chowchilla in June 2005. The RHDP offered Delta Dental a unique opportunity to partner with DMC to bring affordable dental care to low-income Healthy Families Program children. Over a two year period, DMC will offer approximately 1,850 oral preventative and treatment visits, and estimates it will have 800 new pediatric dental users.

The Chowchilla project is focused on serving a Special Population (SP), the children of migrant and seasonal farm workers. These children face significant access barriers that prevent them from obtaining health care. The barriers are multi-faceted and complex, especially considering the diversity that exists with Madera County's migrant and seasonal worker communities. Geographic and linguistic isolation, coupled with immigration, cultural factors, poverty and insurance issues, interplay to create an extremely hard to reach population.

As part of the service

delivery strategy to reduce oral health disparities, the RHDP granted the DMC \$174,960 over two fiscal years. These funds support a half-time dentist, and a multi-culturally diverse and competent oral health team to provide after work and evening hour services, oral health education, community outreach, and insurance enrollment and advocacy to access available resources.

Children receive medical care and oral screening during their visit. The on-site dental clinic serves children who do not have a dental provider. The clinic screens families without insurance for eligibility. Of those meeting eligibility requirements for publicly funded programs such as HFP, 100% are informed of the benefit of participation and offered assistance with completion of the application.

The dental practice offers treatment services, which include: Preventive Oral Health Services (oral exams, examinations of the head and neck, cleanings, x-rays, fluo-



ride treatments), Restorative Services (fillings for cavities), Rehabilitative Services (crowns, fixed bridges), Endodontic Treatment (root canals), Periodontal Treatment (treatment of the gums), and Emergency Services (treatment for pain and/or swelling).

DMC offers one-on-one counseling sessions with patients and their families to educate them regarding pediatric dental care. These sessions focus on prevention of oral health diseases by increasing

"Jeffrey" the puppet demonstrates proper brushing and flossing and briefly discusses the relationship between good nutrition and healthy teeth at the Chowchilla Clinic.

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The Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board is dedicated to improving the health of Californians by increasing access to affordable, comprehensive, quality health care coverage.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3: CHOWCHILLA

caregiver awareness of how pediatric dental caries can cause severe pain, infection, abscesses, chewing difficulty, malnutrition, and gastro-intestinal disorders. Dental caries can also lead to poor speech articulation and low self-esteem. Dental Assistants also educate parents on prevention of baby bottle tooth decay, good oral health practices and the need for regular dental visits and sealants for children.

Another project component involves providing community dental awareness. Staff fulfill this critical function through community presentations held in schools and at community events such as health fairs. Presentations include introductions by the screening team (dentist, dental assistant and/or com-

munity oral health educator/insurance enrollment specialist) and then a question and answer period. During the question and answer period, children are told what is going to be done during the screening and how they can help by opening their mouth wide when it is their turn. The question and answer part gets children talking about the health of their teeth. Finally, the dental screen form is completed by the dental care professional noting caries, active infection and the need for a cleaning.

The Chowchilla Dental Project has provided over 400 dental encounters to approximately 142 children since July 1, 2005.

To ensure that more of California's children get the health and dental care they deserve, the RHDP is proud to continue partnerships with rural clinics and partici-

pating HFP health and dental plans.

Chowchilla dental staff demonstrate proper brushing techniques to a young child.

